

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
Monthly Report for February 1946

INDUSTRIALIST'S PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT STORES

The Industrial Relations Secretary wishes to report a really significant development during February in his work with Department stores. With a special effort begun in February, the first week in March gave the Industrial Relations Secretary, the New Jersey Urban League, and Newark, another placement of a Negro girl as a sales-clerk in another downtown department store. This is the second downtown Department store in which we have placed Negro girls as sales clerks, and a total of six placements have now been effected from this office in the two stores. This is not the first placement of a Negro girl as a sales clerk in this second store, but it represents the first placement from this office. A few placements have been made previously, dating back to (and a direct result of) the beginning of the Industrial Relations Secretary's work with the President of this second store, in June of 1945.

INDUSTRIAL FIRMS Strikes have tied up the major portion of our plans with industrial plants. Keeping in touch with executives has been an important but ticklish job. Personal contact with the President and/or Vice-President of six large companies was continued through the month. Contacts with the Personnel manager were frequent and involved nearly 100 companies. Continued receipt of job-orders (though few in comparison to six months ago, but about the same as last month) is a result of the latter relationships.

The Industrial Relations Secretary wrote to all the Veterans formerly in a Signal Corp unit, who have had good telephone experience, to go to their nearest Urban League office (when convenient) to discuss possibilities of utilizing their experiences in the peace-time communications work. The names of these Veterans were supplied by a Veteran we placed as a Lineman at New Jersey Bell Telephone Company - the first such placement ever made in the state of New Jersey. The men were in the same company in which our applicant had served. Letters from these men showed heart-felt appreciation of the fact that "someone, somewhere is thinking about us." It appears that we have rendered a real service to some of these men, buried in the deep South, indicating their disappointment and disillusionment caused by inability to see even any hope that America will allow them to utilize their highest skills. One of them received our letter and came straight from South Carolina to this office for our direct help. He was a more enterprising personality, but with failures to get decent employment strewn over his path in South Carolina. He is not in any immediate need of funds, and is a self-supporting, independent type of person. Even though our letter did not imply that opportunities were available in New Jersey or that anyone should come to New Jersey, we referred him to New Jersey Bell Telephone Company as a Lineman.

EMPLOYMENT Excluding sixteen persons coming voluntarily or referred to the

Industrial Relations office for various types of counselling, there was, in February, a total of ninety-four different persons interviewed for other than "household" jobs - forty-five male applicants and forty-nine female applicants who required a total of one hundred and twelve interviews.

Referrals for household employment totaled forty-three (job orders, fifty-six) for the month; other referrals totaled fifty-two, thirty-two female and twenty male. Grand totals for all types of employment handled in the Industrial Relations Department are: ninety-five referrals and one hundred and fifty-five employment interviews.

Important facts to show trends are as follows: 46.6% of the male registrants in February were Veterans, only 35% more than in January. 82% of the male registrants

needing counselling were Veterans. Of twenty-four men for whom there was absolutely no job to be found here or through the USES, 86.6% were Veterans, and 55 1/3% of the Veterans and non-Veterans were 22 years old or less.

This sample shows that there are no jobs for 55 1/3% of Negro men seeking suitable work. This sample shows that 55 1/3% of Negro men utterly unable to get jobs, are young men 22 years old or less. The significance of this for the families of these men (most of the youngest included here are married since the war), is extremely alarming.

The picture changes only slightly for women. 54.6% of the female applicants can find no jobs, compared to 55 1/3% of the men for whom there are no jobs. Six or 55.2% of the seventeen women for whom no jobs were available, refused a total of nine job referrals because the rates of pay offered were too low - 50 or 55¢ an hour. That some of these women are receiving Unemployment Compensation is not to their discredit, however. Their summary of their family or personal responsibilities, with today's higher cost of living, makes it very reasonable that they not accept such rates - particularly when intelligent enough to do work worth a higher rate.

These samples do not show the number of rejections of persons referred from this office. We do not have facilities for following-up each referral to determine successful placement. However, our best information shows a steady, and alarming rise in rejections - now about 17%. We have no other alternative but to report that discrimination has become a factor dealing strong blows to the economic survival of our Negro population. We have a good cross-section of the Negro community coming to our Industrial Relations office for help. Their representation extends from laborer to professional worker, from persons with doctorates to persons with only one or two years of rural schooling. We thus have a fair and good sample for our conclusions.

The situation is alarming. Unemployment compensation and Soldier's Readjustment Allowances are the only bulwarks holding back a tide of suffering. This is the beginning of March, 1946.